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In the Claims.

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-2 (canceled)

3. (currently amended) A tube for collecting blood with a vacuum provided with a blood collection hollow needle arranged at an end of the tube and with a sealing stopper comprising a front, external face thereof which comprises a cavity that is formed on and opens externally to the stopper, said cavity having a spherical dome shape with a concavity that faces away from the the end of the test tube and a bottom which is provided with a piercing guiding point suitable for a hollow needle to pierce axially therein and further through said stopper for blood collection into the tube, and wherein said stopper further comprises: a peripheral region and a central region of said external face thereof, the central region being provided with an opening for allowing needle access to said piercing guiding point provided in said concavity; an annular lip that is formed monolithic with said stopper so as to protrude radially from said peripheral region over said external face of the stopper, towards said central region thereof and up to and around said opening; and an annular groove that is formed under said annular lip and between said annular lip and said external face and surrounds said piercing guiding point, said groove being shaped so as to retain and contain any blood drop that is entrained out of the tube and through the stopper upon withdrawal of the needle from the stopper.

4. (canceled)

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5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended) The A blood collection tube for collecting blood with a vacuum provided with a sealing stopper of claim 1, further comprising a front, external face thereof which comprises a cavity that is formed on and opens externally to the stopper, said cavity having a spherical dome shape with a concavity that faces away from the end of the test tube and which is provided centrally, with a bottom hollow, said hollow being provided centrally with a piercing guiding point suitable for a hollow needle to pierce axially therein and further through said stopper for blood collection into the tube and in said cavity, said hollow forming a guide for guiding the needle upon insertion thereof in said piercing guiding point and through the stopper for blood collection, and wherein said stopper further comprises: a peripheral region and a central region of said external face thereof, the central region being provided with an opening for allowing needle access to said piercing guiding point provided in said hollow; an annular lip that is formed monolithic with said stopper so as to protrude radially from said peripheral region over said external face of the stopper, towards said central region thereof and up to and around said opening; and an annular groove that is formed under said annular lip and between said annular lip and said external face and surrounds said piercing guiding point, said groove being shaped so as to retain and contain any blood drop that is entrained out of the tube and through the stopper upon withdrawal of the needle from the stopper.

7. (previously presented) The blood collection tube with

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sealing stopper of claim 3, wherein said external cavity comprises an edge, said annular lip protruding radially inward from said edge so as to surround said central region opening and to form in said cavity the annular groove that surrounds said piercing guiding point.

8. (previously presented) The blood collection tube with sealing stopper of claim 3, wherein said opening is shaped so as to allow at least free passage of the needle covered by an elastic sheath.

9. (previously presented) The blood collection tube with sealing stopper of claim 3, wherein the stopper comprises a bottom, inner face formed by a collar and by a concentric cylindrical protrusion that is enclosed by said collar so as to provide a seat therebetween, the tube being engageable with a mouth part thereof in said seat for double, inner and outer sealing engagement.

10. (canceled)

11. (canceled)

12. (new) A sealing stopper for sealingly close, so as to maintain vacuum therein, a vacuum blood collection tube, the stopper comprising: a front- external face thereof provided with a cavity that is formed on and opens externally to the stopper and has a piercing point suitable for a hollow blood collection needle to pierce axially therein and further through said stopper for blood collection into the tube, said cavity comprising centrally a bottom hollow with a closed end that is provided fully open prior to, and such as to enable free guided insertion of the needle therethrough and up to said piercing point, said piercing point being provided on the closed end of said bottom hollow; a

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peripheral region and a central region of said external face of the stopper, the central region being provided with an opening for allowing needle insertion; an annular lip that is formed monolithic with the stopper so as to protrude radially from said peripheral region over said external face of the stopper, towards said central region thereof and up to and around said opening; and an annular groove that is formed under said annular lip and between said annular lip and said external face and surrounds said central region, said groove being shaped so as to retain and contain any blood drop that is entrained out of the tube and through the stopper upon withdrawal of the needle from the stopper.

13. (new) The stopper of claim 12, wherein said cavity has a spherical dome shape.

14. (new) The stopper of claim 13, wherein said external cavity comprises an edge, said annular lip protruding radially inward from said edge so as to surround said central region opening and to form in said cavity the annular groove that surrounds said piercing guiding point.

15. (new) The stopper of claim 12, wherein said opening is shaped so as to allow at least free passage of the needle covered by an elastic sheath.

16. (new) The stopper of claim 12, further comprising a bottom, inner face formed by a collar and by a concentric cylindrical protrusion that is enclosed by said collar so as to provide a seat therebetween, the tube being engageable with a mouth part thereof in said seat for double, inner and outer sealing engagement.